

Spring 2013

Pathos, Spring 2013

Portland State University. Student Publications Board

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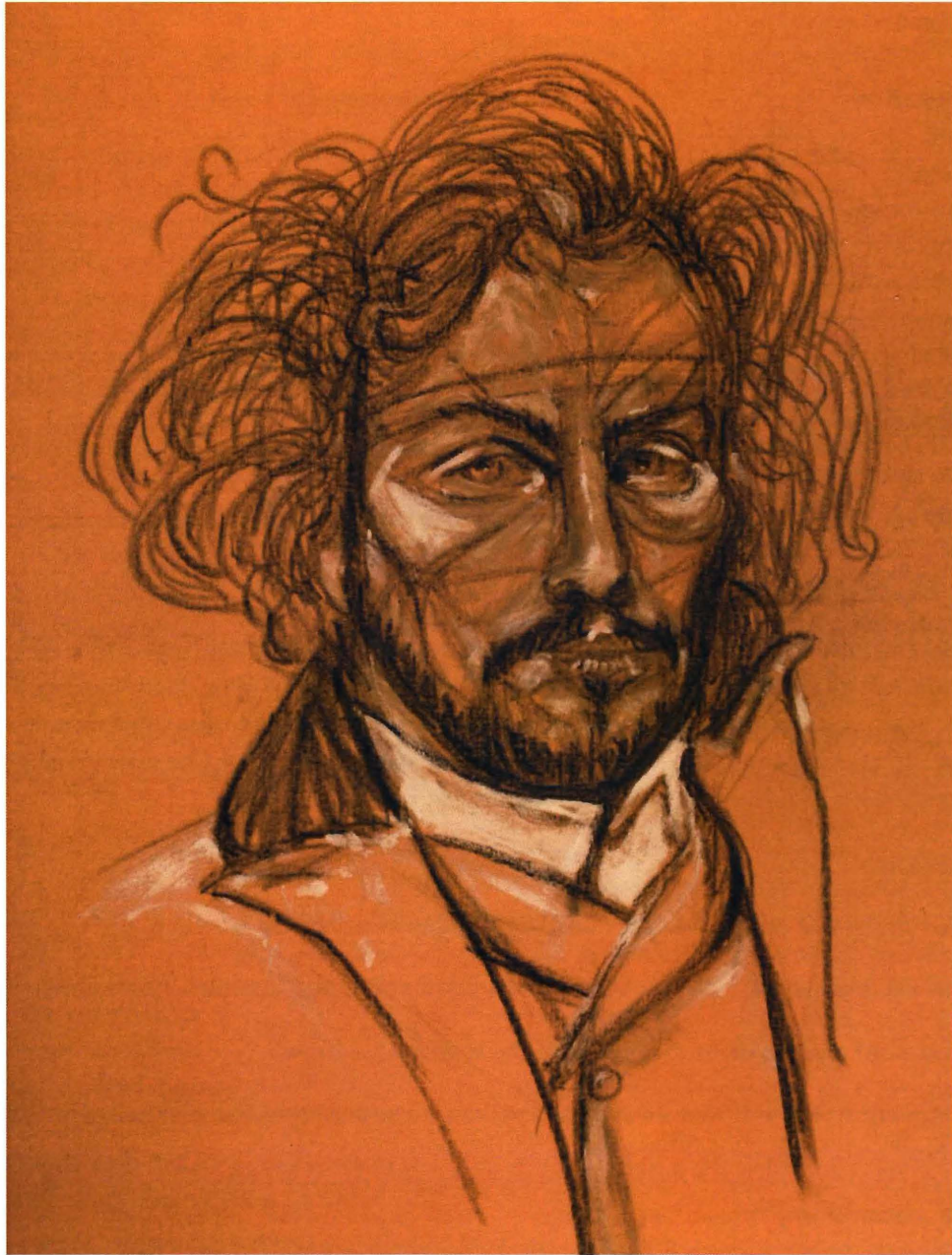
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PATHOS

LITERARY MAGAZINE



PATHOS

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
DEENA ANREISE

ASSISTANT EDITORS
EMILY GRAVLIN
KATE MARSHALL

SPRING 2013

FACULTY ADVISOR
JUDSON RANDALL

Another school year has come and gone, which would normally mean that summer is upon us. But we live in Portland, so...

In this instance, the end of the school year means that my time with both *Pathos Literary Magazine* and Portland State University has come to an end. I am ecstatic to graduate with an MA in Writing, and equally excited to welcome fellow graduate student Kate Marshall as next year's Editor-in-Chief. Congratulations, Kate!

This final issue provided an incredible opportunity for me to spread my leadership, editorial, and design wings for *Pathos* one last time. For the initial layout stages, I collaborated with PSU alumni and fellow MA: Writing graduate Mel Wells. Mel took the new *Pathos* logo created by PSU student and *Vanguard* Online Editor/Student Publications Webmaster Claudette Raynor and laid it out beautifully on the interior pages. Both women are such talented, design-savvy individuals that I am better and brighter for having rubbed artistic elbows with them. Additionally, I'd like to thank Tyler Bertram, videographer extraordinaire, for working with *Pathos* to produce an incredible video for use on the website: www.pathoslitmag.com

And a huge THANK YOU goes out to the incredibly talented Emily Gravlín for her consistent editorial prowess over the past year. As an MS: Writing graduate, she will certainly go on to a remarkable future in the industry.

It's been lovely.

Deena Anreise
Editor-in-Chief

On the front cover:
Untitled
Carrie Clore

Finding Trapdoors

Emily Griffin

Some days, there are too many people
so I swallow the sky.
I snap mirrors into thousands of shards
and paint my eyelids with their dust.
When static floods the city
my blood powers the subways
and every streetlamp.
I tell the sun when to rise
and will let the leaves die when the time comes.
On heat-wave afternoons in Denver
I fill apartment graves with potting soil
and patch cracks between bricks with dandelions
because the sidewalk is all concrete
and tinted windows line every commute.
I lock my door
but during breakfasts following light-tinged bedtimes
I find broken bobby pins leftover in the hall.
Sometimes I stretch the streets and build ladders to the sun
but the rungs always crumble,
so I light the world with a Bic
and sip from the ceramic.

Moonchild

Megan Sinnott

At night I feel the pull
of the moon on the core
of my body. It says, go
visit my child, the ocean. Tip
toe your way into the water,
my daughter, the waves lapping
at your knees. Push yourself
into her body, rock with her,
with me. Remove your thin clothes, swim
to the center, shining and fragile, so
helpless against our currant. There we will
break you, sink you to the bottom of the sea
and you will become mine. You will live in a crater
on my face, the one closest to my cold heart
and there I will keep you safe from everyone
but most of all, from yourself.

The Ocean Hour

Sarah Hobernicht

In the mornings
When the sky is pale
And the sirens distant
I pretend the roar of the city
Into the crash of waves,
And in that azure light
I float.

Weight of Water
Megan Sinnott

I dropped the anthology
in the bath. The water wrapped
its arms around the yellowed
pages, the binding sunk
to the bottom without
a sound. I blinked down
at the book resting
between my legs like a dead
fish. I touched a page,
the water warm against
my wrist. It slid from its spine
and floated to the top, lying open
like a flower. I caressed each
page of the book, one
by one, until they filled
the tub, the poet's voices
rising above the weight of water.

Hummingbird
Joseph Boyd

The compass points north and my heels point
south
Letting go of my need for the wind to blow
me westward
I step off a canyon
ready to drop into a ravine
waiting for clouds above to bury me
waiting for clods of dirt to fill my boots to the
brim
Full of cries of my father
of my mother
of the child we lost
As I lie, eyes open
mouth relaxed
waiting for this burial ceremony to begin
I feel a hummingbird kiss my left ear
It whispers gently but fervently –
remember me

What Comes Next (an excerpt)
Todd Albertson

I'd chased the creep through uptown. Through downtown. Now he wanted to go tell it on the mountain, so to speak. So, I'm chasing him up there. This one's easy to spot. He's wearing a top that has no business being on a man, unless he's a fruitcake. He's ducking and weaving through some cars parked on the upslope, too stupid to recognize that his blouse is screaming like a siren; too harebrained to realize I'm gaining on him because he's sidestepping so much.

I don't break a sweat.

I lunge and take him by the collar, tossing him back as easy as a shot of whiskey.

He recovers, and then his hands rise like a boxer's. "I'll kill you, Man," he says. "I'll kill you."

My badge reflects cold and silver sunbeams onto his forehead. I draw.

He steps away and stumbles. Put that away!" he screams, scampering in the air like a roach flipped on its back. "Please! No!"

The hammer clicks under my thumb once, twice.

You know—Momma was a good Christian. Earned her right to fly with the angels. She raised me well, taught me straight from the Bible. She always said, "A kind answer turneth away wrath."

But I'm a more pragmatic fellow.

See, I find you can accomplish the exact same thing:

With a bullet.

Unspoken

Michael A. Berliner

A cold light glowed from Marlow's bedroom. Kay stood quietly in the dark hallway, looking into the hard light. For a moment, she did not recognize her son as he typed furiously at his computer. She thought he looked like his father from behind. She tried to remember what she had come to tell him. She could not. She felt nauseous, and the bright light made the sensation worse.

"Why are you up so late?" Kay whispered from the open door.

"Just working," Marlow said.

"On what there?" Kay snooped, looking at the computer screen—a flashing mess of blue light.

"Homework."

Marlow raised his legs to the table as he dropped the keyboard into his lap. The shoelaces of his white Converse were covered in dry mud. Hayseed stuck out like thorns from the fabric. He had received the pair of Converse shoes for his birthday. They were far from comfortable, but they were fashionable and Tristan liked them. Marlow liked that Tristan liked the shoes—he could like himself because of it. All he had wanted for his birthday was a pair of Converse shoes.

"Boy, you're always working. I'd think we would see something finished by now," Kay teased.

"You think?" Marlow answered curtly.

"Well, how do you like being a whole fifteen years?"

"Fine."

Marlow's face was blue from the monitor. He did not look at his mother. He was irritated; she had been acting strangely the whole day.

"Why aren't you off to bed now? Got service tomorrow," she said.

"Thought I'd go with Tristan. Her papa has his '58 Chevy ready for show. He's gonna let her drive it."

"Is that so? I thought we talked about seeing that girl?"

"Right—well, her papa hates me, anyway."

Kay saw the hayseed sticking out of Marlow's shoe. She remembered tying the shoes neatly between two yellow nylon ribbons and fixing a bow with the loose ends. All he had wanted for his birthday was Converse shoes.

"I see you been working in your shoes, you like 'em that much?"

“I guess they’re OK.”

Marlow looked at his feet. He remembered Tristan waiting for him in the cherry grove by the Miller ranch. Kay and Jim had not noticed he had left.

They never notice unless you get caught, Marlow thought.

The grove had been in full bloom. The endless rows of black twisted trunks were all covered in pink flowers. Tristan wore her only dress—a short lace wedding dress. Tristan once said her mother had an embolism in childbirth. Her bare feet had glided above the dirt as she ran to him. The world paused to catch its breath against the rolling acres of orchard behind her. Her peach and plum arms pulled at the horizon—the wind came with her and stopped at his chest.

Marlow had liked it when he ran along with her to a derelict barn. The dry rot soured the air like stale perfume. He liked it when she giggled and winked at him. Her black eye had almost fully healed. Hayseed fell like yellow snow inside the barn. She had a bottle of red wine she had stolen from her father. They took turns swinging it in the air and guzzling from it like movie pirates. The wine burned in his throat like molten copper. His head began to buzz and they held each other on a heap of unpacked straw, breathing together as the night settled beyond the broken windows. Marlow remembered putting his lips to hers. He liked how her mouth tasted like grapes.

“Why don’t you come along to service with us tomorrow,” Kay insisted. “Jim and I would like it if you did. I’ll cook ya breakfast, we got anything you want. Pancakes as wide as your head, sausage, bacon, eggs fresh from Aunt Maggie’s coop, and all’s you got to do is say a few good words to the Lord for your papa and me.”

Kay took a few steps out of the darkness of the door. Her unpainted lips stretched pathetically to her cheeks. Marlow ignored her.

“What d’ya say?”

Marlow grimaced at his computer screen. His fingers continued typing. They did not slow or stop.

“The Lord will hear you,” she added.

“And what good will that do for any of us?” he growled. A hayseed stem caught his foot and he kicked the desk impulsively. Kay jumped at the crash of his heel against the wood.

“That ain’t fair,” Kay shouted, “Jim just...” her words drifted away from her.

“Stop it,” he said. “You’ve been acting insane lately. Hurt my damn foot.” He pulled the stem out of the fabric, making sure that she saw every movement.

Kay gripped Marlow by the shoulder. His bones stuck out without any muscle. A shudder ran through his body and his shoulder jerked out of her grasp. Marlow spun his chair to look at his mother.

Kay saw the way the light cut across his head, exposing the streaks of yellow and red that swirled into each little curl like leaping fire. She saw how his brow was broad and smooth, and how his nose curled over his slightly feminine lips. Marlow had the face of a young man becoming proud of his anger.

Kay thought about just what she would like to do to him—hands against his throat, squeezing out all the petulance. She did nothing. She pulled at her nightgown. Her joints crunched into a new position and her back muscles burned.

So much like Richard, she thought.

Her heart sizzled like a hot coal extinguished by rain. She could not hit a boy damned to look like a dead man. Kay felt the sensation pass. She rubbed her wrinkled palms over her navel. She felt too sick for anger, anyway.

“Well?” Marlow demanded. He was tapping a foot on the floor. The shoes were like ivory in the light.

“Get to bed, Marlow; it ain’t right for a boy to be up this late, working himself to the grave, anyhow.”

“Like papa did?” Marlow realized he had gone too far. Terror made his stomach drop. “I’m sorry, Mom,” he said, to ease the feeling. It was too late. He turned in his chair and allowed himself to be distracted again by the computer monitor.

Kay felt the nausea in her throat. She saw how Marlow’s neck was already turning red for the season. She rubbed her skinny hand along Marlow’s shoulder. He ignored her hand and it went away.

“Love you,” she said, and disappeared into the dark hallway.

Marlow said nothing.

Kay stroked her stomach with the tips of her nails and shut the door of her bedroom firmly behind her.

“Did you talk to him? He’s up, anyway,” Jim, fully awake, said from the bed.

“Tomorrow, after service. We’ll air it all out tomorrow.” Kay slid her tan legs between the bed sheets. She kept her face turned from Jim.

“We put it off a week now. We have to drop him off Monday.”

“Can’t you do it?” Kay felt sicker.

“Doesn’t he hate me enough? We decided you’d break the news.”

“But today’s Richard’s—” Kay’s voice caught in her throat.

Jim pushed his body into his wife’s back. Her body was cold. Her skin glowed in the light from the street. She was concealing tears.

“It’s just the longer we hide the truth the harder it will be to tell it all.”

“Maybe. I just don’t think the boy’s school is right anymore.”

"You know it's too late for that."

"I know," she said. "But I'd just rather have him close. San Francisco might as well be New York."

"I've already made the payment."

"You know what he's doing this late?"

"No."

"Working," Kay whimpered. She rubbed her hand against her neck.

Like papa did, she thought.

"Text messaging, more like it."

"No, I think he's trying to do good. We can't punish him in the middle of trying. It ain't right."

"We're doing him right. We've already had one near miss too many with that Compton girl."

"She's a sweet girl. You know that."

"It's best to keep them apart. I hear the girl's papa spotted her leaving the clinic—that wino bastard got at her right there."

"I know. I was there."

"Why were you there?" Jim asked suspiciously.

"I was just walking by—heading to the cleaners. Poor girl, something should be done about that."

"I hear the sheriff is looking into it now."

They both fell silent, studying the shadows in the room. The room was filled with the sounds of breathing and rain tapping softly at the window.

"What if we take Marlow to the doctor?" Kay asked suddenly. "You know—get his head examined. Maybe the doctor can give him a pill like the McCredie kid?"

Jim laughed bitterly. "Short of sterilization, there isn't much anyone can do for Marlow." Jim took his wife's hands into his own. "The boy's school is right." He kissed her fingertips.

"You're right, we're doing him right," Kay agreed, reluctantly.

"How did he like his birthday present?"

"The Converse?"



Los Piletones
Oran Stainbrook

Takuboku Tanka
Nick Giampietro

はたらけど
はたらけど猶わが生活楽にならざり
ちっと手を見る

translation:
He Did Not Title His Works
Nick Giampietro

I work,
and I work,
but life gets no better;
I look fixedly at my hands.

“Yeah, those—does he like them?”

“I don’t think he’s took ’em off since he got them. It’s sweet that you know his color.”

“For now—boys are fickle,” Jim muttered, turning his face into his pillow. “You’ll see; in a year you won’t recognize him anymore.”

Kay stared at the wall, trying to remember Richard’s face. She could see only Marlow’s face staring back at her, and then it was lost to the darkness. She felt the sickness in her head. Jim’s index finger ran along her leg and clutched the inside of her thigh. He kissed her shoulder. The index finger turned into a coarse hand.

“You know it’s no use. I’m sick from trying that.”

Jim’s hand hovered over her skin. She could feel her small hairs brush against his palm. Jim sighed and kissed his wife. She ignored him and the hand went away.

It was a bright Sunday morning in April when Richard hung himself—bastard did it just to get at me. She pulled her legs to her stomach and cradled her fists beneath her chin. She remembered how Richard had smelled of vermouth and how they had traded more bruises than kisses. The gloom ran along her spine until her shoulders shook it away. Kay had Jim now. Five years of Jim. She did not want another child, but with Marlow gone she could do it all over again. The way it should have been.

At first light, she thought, I’ll make us a big breakfast with pancakes, eggs, and bacon—a whole feast. We will eat it up and go to service, all of us together. We’ll all be fat, happy, and together.

A crisp light from the bathroom darted across the blackness. The warmth of Jim’s body against her back had dissipated. She turned to face the empty space where his body had been. It smelled of hickory and leather. She could love Jim. He was a decent man. Kay stretched her body over the space. She dragged the sheets to her chest and held the cotton between her thighs. She rubbed her hand over her navel.

The sickness will be better by afternoon at the latest. That’s when I’ll tell them both: after service, when I have all my strength.

The cold cotton felt good cradled in her arms.

He looks so much like Richard—all the boy wanted for his birthday was a pair of Converse.

The wad of cloth was soft, like a small child.

This time I’ll keep it for Jim—he’s a good man. I’ll keep it for us all.

Kay buried her face in the sheets. The fabric smelled like home, and the nausea dissipated with sleep.

An Open Letter to Strangers

Grant Howard

I have to meet all of you
and you are all something..
and you want me to know it.

You make it known that you are a lesbian and that you don't like me
because I got a cock.

I want to tell you it wasn't my decision to grow this heavy thing.

You hate god and I am fool
because
all smart people know not even god would believe in god.
I don't believe in you but you are still in front of my face
like a goddamn
Pimple.

You want me to know that you are black
and that I better know it because I am white and I should feel bad about it.
I don't.

I just stopped to ask you for directions to the dry cleaners.
I want to mention to you that I am color blind but you are too busy hating my ass for something strangers did to your
strangers.

So now you and me stay strangers..
even though we got more in common than you would like to believe.
Maybe we both need directions to the cleaners.

But it's never enough...

you want to show me that you are a musician
that you are a painter
that you have dreads
that you like anime
that you make more money than I do
that you can lift heavier weights than I can
that you are truly a world traveler because you have so many shot glasses..
that you are a scholar because you read a book.

Then I let you in on something

I'm a good drunk but a better writer!
and to keep the beers coming!
...and to pour me another shot because I'm not going anywhere and soon!

...and then you want to tell me that you are also a drunk and a writer.
so I punch you in that ugly nonsense-sayer of yours.
your teeth eat my hand up to the wrist
and I have already written a poem in my head and finished my beer before you hit the ground.

I shout...

I'm the drunk at this bar!
and the next bar!
and the next bar after that!
that this is my bar!
and I'm the one who writes the pretty words around here!

(I feel confident saying this because Hemingway and Bukowski are long dead.)

Then the police come because they want to tell me they are the police...

And nobody ever contests that one.



Specters of Fires Past
Carrie Clore

Requiem Ad Hoc

Angus Lowry

Nautical sways or grassy mound stays

Decisive interactions you see
Internal contractions there be
Combined distractions of chain reactions

Together forever without hasty infractions

Disdain bears only pain
Absents of light without gain
Ever dispersed with no hope

The stain

Of lightless dark,
Fruitless interactions remain

To the end abstain

We'll meet again
When no light remains
When lifeless blood is in the veins
Harried though not to the last

We all leave Earth, too fast

CONTRIBUTORS

Nick Giampietro is a student of Japanese poetry and literature, and is involved with the Department of English. He is excited to be a contributor for this issue of *Pathos*.

Oran Stainbrook is an aspiring permaculturist, village builder, and astronaut. He can often be found with his head in the clouds. At times inconsistent in his narrative mode, I detest the grid. He enjoys!

Angus Lowry is an adult student studying psychology. He has been writing amateur poetry for years simply because he enjoys it; to him it's a kind of meditation in which he can exercise lexiconic possibilities. He finds the struggles and trials it takes to produce the result challenging and beneficial.

Grant Howard is a born-and-raised Portland poet and prose writer. He enjoys cigars, jiu-jitsu, bars, not being behind bars, and women and men of good conversation and honest character.

Emily Griffin has been in Portland for almost a year, and has developed a love/hate relationship with the rain. She enjoyed poetry for long enough to want to be a poet. Anis Mojgani is her favorite, but she wants Dostoevsky to write her biography.

Megan Sinnott is a girl who originated in the Philadelphia area. She likes to write and cuddle with her pet rats. She works at the Helen Gordon Center, where four year-olds request that she tell them stories about princesses and alligators.

Michael A. Berliner graduated with honors from Washington State University, where he received his bachelor's degree in English literary studies. He is now a graduate student of Book Publishing at Portland State University. He enjoys spending his summers reading, freshwater fishing, and tending to his vegetable garden.

Joseph Boyd is a history major graduating in summer 2013. In the fall he is following his call to be a Unitarian Universalist minister by attending Union Theological Seminary in New York City. Poetry expresses the holy, and he is grateful to *Pathos* for the opportunity to share his words with you.

Eric Watson is a graduate student of physical geography. When he's not cooped up in the lab, he can most likely be found on a long bike ride or relaxing with his boyfriend.

Dan Brownhill is a spontaneous transplant from New York who landed at PSU and now avoids looking east. He enjoys coffee, craft beer, and quiet, elevated spaces. He looks at the clock twice a day, at 3:14, and writes to maintain his stability.

Zachary Scott Hamilton is the author of fourteen zines, including *Temple of Sinew*, *The Orchestra of Machines*, *Wallet of Hexagons*, and *HAIR LAND* (IPRC zine of the month award 2008), and his work has appeared in various magazines, including *The Portland Review*, *Trigger Fish* and *HOUSEFIRE*.

Carrie Clore is a mixed-media artist pursuing a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Art Practices with a minor in writing. When she is not sequestered in her art studio drawing the perfect circle, she enjoys reading, writing, and outdoor activities.

Todd Albertson is an honors student majoring in geography. After graduating next spring, he intends to move on to an MFA program in creative writing. He enjoys reading and writing speculative fiction, and relaxes by spending time outdoors.

Sarah Hobernicht is a junior majoring in English. She loves reading, writing, drawing, and chocolate; she wishes it were possible to combine them without getting hilariously suspicious brown smudges on all of her work.

On the back cover:
Eq 2013
Zachary Scott Hamilton

Finding the Ocean

Daniel W. Brownhill

Red Wine and Candlelight

Eric Watson

There is a beauty in the way you laugh.
So full of innocence,
and reminiscent of a child's.
So full of indulgence,
and completely unaware.
Unburdened by past strife,
unbridled by future uncertainty.

My jovial jesting brings definition
to your laugh lines
your face- fully animated
I wish to memorize this feeling.

In this moment,
in this room,
just me, and just you.
There is a beauty in the way you laugh.

Solitude is theoretical
in nature, for example
finding the ocean, the hidden beach
and trusting theory
you wander, turning,
poking with your big toe
at exes, expectations,
an unborn baby
just under the surface of the sand.
The smaller playful
waves sneak up and tackle
their brothers,
rolling across the sand
tangled and laughing.
Sticky from the salt spray
your ears and eyes
are eroded, lose a layer
that has grown thick
this past year.
Bend slowly and scoop
a jar of the waves
to keep in the cupboard
and sip
the nights you dream of the sand.



Optimism
Oran Stainbrook



Portland State UNIVERSITY

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This is your magazine.

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All work included in each issue of *Pathos Literary Magazine* is chosen from the student body at PSU

